

sale of its assets to fund democracy promotion, civil society and rule-of-law programs in Russia, as well as economic reform efforts.

At the same time, we have democracy promotion programs under way across Russia and the rest of the region, through the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute, and the International Republican Institute.

So there is obviously a possibility that duplications of efforts will take place unless this Congress finds ways to ensure that it doesn't. We don't want to see U.S. Government-funded organizations compete to do the same kinds of activities if that leads to duplication and waste, and the democracy promotion in that region is too important to see money wasted at a time when Russian President Putin and others are forcing their own brand of authoritarian government on their nations.

This measure has been amended in a way that seeks to mandate that any successor to the U.S. Government-funded Enterprise Fund in Russia has to reach an agreement with the Eurasia Foundation before it engages in any democracy promotion efforts in that country. Hopefully, that will eliminate duplication to some degree.

The bill, as amended, does not go as far as some of us would like, I must note. It does not address the similar situation that will arise in the Ukraine in the next few years when our U.S. Government-funded Enterprise Fund there closes down and seeks to set up its own successor foundation that may, once again, end up duplicating the work done by the Eurasia Foundation in the Ukraine.

It also does not address a completely separate question about how the assets of such U.S. Government-funded Enterprise Funds in Russia and Ukraine will be disposed of, an issue that involves hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. taxpayer funds. It has been the practice to ensure that the taxpayers get back at least 50 percent of the funds held by such funds when they close down their operations.

There is an effort in the House-passed fiscal year 2008 foreign aid appropriations bill, however, to allow our fund in Russia not to turn back to our Treasury half of its assets. That would mean that the taxpayers would lose \$160 million, or perhaps even more than that, depending on the value of the assets sold in the case of the Russia fund alone. Those are monies that might otherwise go to help fund other worthwhile programs.

Perhaps this is not the bill in which to debate that issue, and our efforts in committee to address it in this measure were unsuccessful. But I take this opportunity to point out that issue in the hopes that the administration will be supported by Congress in its efforts to follow current practice and ensure that our Treasury gets back that very significant sum of money.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2949, authorizing 15 million dollars in appropriations to the Eurasia Foundation for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009. This legislation will enable the Eurasia Foundation—which has been operating in the former Soviet Union since 1992—to continue to engage at the highest level in democracy building, civil society promotion and private sector expansion.

I wish to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their support of this legislation, as well as Congressman GALLEGLY who was the lead sponsor of this legislation in the 109th Congress. All of these Members have been tireless advocates for providing critical aid and support to former Soviet countries.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation comes at a critical time in our relations with Eurasian states that are still in political, economic and social transition following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is also coming at a time when U.S. aid to the region is unconscionably shrinking. To this end, organizations such as the Eurasia Foundation are critical components of our strategy to remain engaged at governmental and non-governmental levels in a region that stretches from Armenia to Uzbekistan and from Ukraine to Kazakhstan.

This legislation recognizes the important work being done by the Eurasia Foundation and its efforts to promote civil society, public administration and rule of law—in a region of the world that needs America's attention, assistance and support. Passage of H.R. 2949 today will provide the Eurasia Foundation—a partner of the U.S.—the funds it needs to continue to issue thousands of grants and operate programs in Eurasia that have proven to be effective over fourteen years.

Again, I want to thank Chairman LANTOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for supporting this important legislation and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation when it comes to the floor for a vote.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2949, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING NICOLAS SARKOZY ON HIS ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY OF FRANCE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 379) congratulating

Nicolas Sarkozy on his election to the presidency of France, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 379

Whereas the Marquis de Lafayette and the people of France offered unparalleled friendship to the people of the United States in their pursuit of freedom and democracy during the American Revolution;

Whereas there are deep cultural ties between the American and French people, as exemplified by the large flow of visitors each year between the two nations, as well as extensive exchanges between United States and French academic institutions, museums, and sister cities;

Whereas the United States is France's 6th largest export market, and its top export market outside of the European Union, and for the United States, France is its 9th largest trading partner, and the United States is the largest foreign investor in France;

Whereas the United States and France are working together to solve important international crises;

Whereas Nicolas Sarkozy, upon winning the election to become the next President of France, said that the United States can count on France as a friend; and

Whereas the people of the United States support any effort by the Governments of France and the United States to maintain and grow a spirit of friendship and cooperation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives congratulates Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy on his election to the presidency of France and welcomes President Sarkozy on the occasion of his appearance before a Joint Meeting of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would first like to commend our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), for introducing this important resolution that congratulates Mr. Sarkozy on being elected the next President of France.

Over two centuries ago, the people of France assisted the people of the United States in their pursuit of independence during the American Revolution. Since then, the U.S. and France have shared an extensive and mutually beneficial relationship. Today, the United States and France are major economic partners, with nearly \$1 billion in trade taking place between the two countries each and every day.